



# BRISTOL

a photographic history of your city

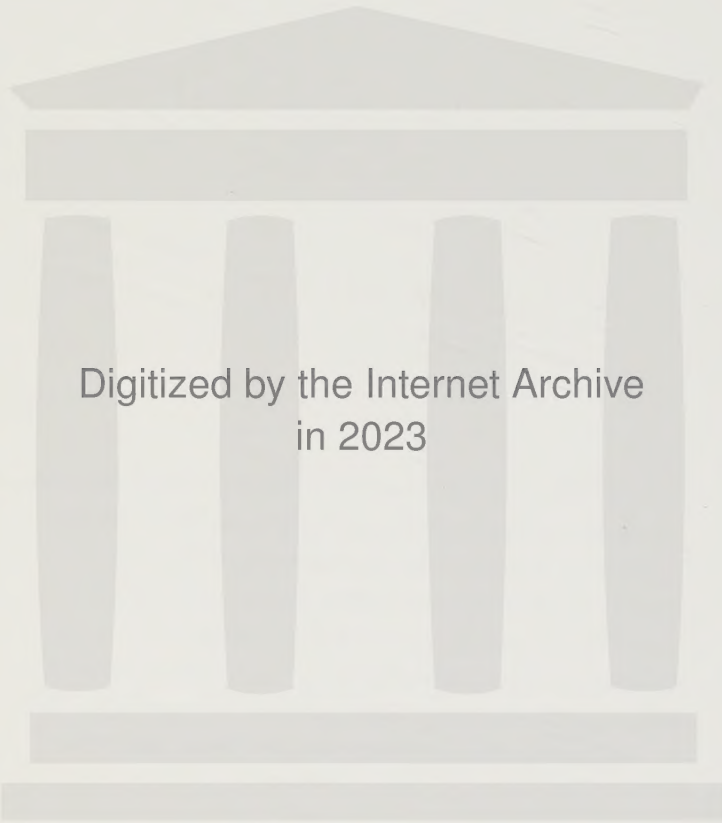




# BRISTOL

## A Photographic History of Your Town

TOM HUTTON is an award-winning writer and photographer who generally specialises in adventure sports and travel. His work takes him to some of the wildest corners of the world, but despite all the travel he has never lost his passion for his home town, Bristol, and he has always been fascinated by the city's pioneering past. He currently lives just north of the city, in the Cotswold Hills very close to the source of the River Frome, with his partner, Steph, and two labradors, Honey and India.



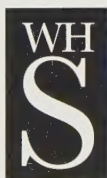
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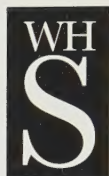


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A Photographic History  
of Your Town

TOM HUTTON





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PUBLISHERS WOULD WELCOME INFORMATION ON OMISSIONS AND INACCURACIES

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# The Making of an Archive

**F**rancis Frith, Victorian founder of the world-famous photographic archive, was a devout Quaker and a highly successful Victorian businessman. By 1860 he was already a multi-millionaire, having established and sold a wholesale grocery business in Liverpool. He had also made a series of pioneering photographic journeys to the Nile region. The images he returned with were the talk of London. An eminent modern historian has likened their impact on the population of the time to that on our own generation of the first photographs taken on the surface of the moon.

Frith had a passion for landscape, and was as equally inspired by the countryside of Britain as he was by the desert regions of the Nile. He resolved to set out on a new career and to use his skills with a camera. He established a business in Reigate as a specialist publisher of topographical photographs.

Frith lived in an era of immense and sometimes violent change. For the poor in the early part of Victoria's reign work was a drudge and the hours long, and ordinary people had precious little free time. Most had not travelled far beyond the boundaries of their own town or village. Mass tourism was in its infancy during the 1860s, but during the next decade the railway network and the establishment of Bank Holidays and half-Saturdays gradually made it possible for the working man and his family to enjoy holidays and to see a little more of the world. With characteristic business acumen, Francis Frith foresaw that these

new tourists would enjoy having souvenirs to commemorate their days out. He began selling photo-souvenirs of seaside resorts and beauty spots, which the Victorian public pasted into treasured family albums.



Francis Frith 1822-1898

Frith's aim was to photograph every town and village in Britain. For the next thirty years he travelled the country by train and by pony and trap, producing fine photographs of seaside resorts and beauty spots that were keenly bought by millions of Victorians.

## The Rise of Frith & Co

Each photograph was taken with tourism in mind, the small team of Frith photographers concentrating on busy shopping streets, beaches, seafronts, picturesque lanes and villages. They also photographed buildings: the Victorian and Edwardian eras were times of huge building activity, and town halls, libraries, post offices, schools and technical colleges were springing up all over the country. They were invariably celebrated by a proud Victorian public, and photo souvenirs — visual records — published by F Frith & Co were sold in their hundreds of thousands. In addition, many new commercial buildings such as hotels, inns and pubs were photographed, often because their owners specifically commissioned Frith postcards or prints of them for re-sale or for publicity purposes.

In order to gain some understanding of the scale of Frith's business one only has to look at the catalogue issued by Frith & Co in 1886: it runs to some 670 pages. By 1890 Frith had created the greatest specialist photographic

# FRANCIS FRITH

## The Making of an Archive

publishing company in the world, with over 2,000 stockists! The picture below shows the Frith & Co display board on the wall of the stockist at Ingleton in the Yorkshire Dales. Beautifully constructed with mahogany frame and gilt inserts, it displayed a dozen scenes.

### Postcard Bonanza

The ever-popular holiday postcard we know today took many years to appear, and F Frith & Co was in the vanguard of its development. Postcards became a hugely popular means of communication and sold in their millions. Frith's company took full advantage of this boom and soon became the major publisher of photographic view postcards.

Francis Frith died in 1898 at his villa in Cannes, his great project still growing. His sons Eustace and Cyril continued their father's monumental task, expanding the number of

views offered to the public and recording more and more places in Britain, as the coasts and countryside were opened up to mass travel. The archive Frith created continued in business for another seventy years. By 1970 it contained over a third of a million pictures of 7,000 cities, towns and villages. The massive photographic record Frith has left to us stands as a living monument to a special and very remarkable man.

This book shows your town as it was photographed by this world-famous archive at various periods in its development over the past 150 years. Every photograph was taken for a specific commercial purpose, which explains why the selection may not show every aspect of the town landscape. However, the photographs, compiled from one of the world's most celebrated archives, provide an important and absorbing record of your town.





# Bristol's Early History before 1850

Despite its rise to prominence as England's second city during the Middle Ages, Bristol's formative years were somewhat downbeat and lacklustre when compared to its glamorous neighbour on the banks of the River Avon, Bath. There was no

real Roman activity within the limits of the current city, although the Romans certainly came close, firstly mining lead on the Mendip Hills, and then later establishing the grand spa of Bath, or Aquae Sulis as it was then known. The nearest recorded Roman settlement was at Sea



**Bristol Bridge 1901** 47883c

This is where it all began: Bricgstow, 'the place by the bridge'. Although it is not known exactly where the first bridge (probably Saxon in origin) stood, the current bridge, shown here, replaced the stone bridge which was built in the 13th century, around the same time as the straightening of the Frome. During the Middle Ages the bridge was lined with 5-storey timber-framed houses. This picture, looking straight up the High Street towards Christ Church, with All Saints church to the left, shows that advertising hoardings were as loud and gaudy in Victorian times as they are now, if not worse. Street transport at the time was divided between trams, horse and carriage and simple hand-drawn carts.



# Bristol's Early History before 1850



**The Centre 1901** 47885c

Taken from St Augustine's Parade, this shot shows a ship docked in St Augustine's Reach, before it was covered over in the late 1930s. The fronts of the buildings on Broad Quay opposite have changed very little, and the Sedan Chair Hotel, despite adopting many different guises over the years, still operates as a city centre bar.

Mills. This was known as Abona, which later became Avone and then Avon. From here they had easy access to the river and therefore to their major port at Caerleon, near Newport.

At this stage, Bristol was little more than a convenient crossing point of the River Avon – hence its name, Bricgstow, which means literally 'place by the bridge' (47883c, opposite). In fact, it was the river, and the relatively easy access to the coast, that gave the future city the commercial edge it needed to become such a major player throughout the Middle Ages. In the Domesday Book it is recorded as 'a trading

town of some importance', with a population of around 2,300. This was borne out by the fact that it already had a mint, which no doubt was needed to fund the considerable amount of trade that was taking place around the busy port. Bristol's early trade was mainly with Ireland, although the connections with the east coast were whittled away by Liverpool and Chester – a sign of things to come. This left Bristol to make the most of its geographical position to deal with the south and west.

The Norman castle, originally of motte and bailey style, was built outside the early

# Bristol's Early History before 1850

## Clifton and the River Avon from the Suspension Bridge 1887 20161

Bristol's ticket to riches, the River Avon, was not without its drawbacks; it was always very treacherous to navigate, even after its course had been straightened, and the huge tidal fluctuations restricted its efficiency as a dock. The floating harbour, designed and built by William Jessop between 1801 and 1809, solved many of the tide-related problems, but it was prone to silting; it was subsequently modified by Isambard Kingdom Brunel later that same century. The outflow into the Avon is seen here, where the Portway bends sharply around to the left.



settlement walls on the banks of the River Frome, a tributary of the Avon. The castle was all but destroyed in 1655, sad to say. Politically speaking, Bristol peaked early, having its hey-day during the 12th century when King Stephen was imprisoned here after his battles with Matilda, the daughter of Henry I. Henry II also spent some of his childhood here; later, because of his fond memories for the area, he granted toll-free passage to the people, allowing Bristol's port to start expanding, initially by importing wine from Gascony in France.

It was becoming clear that if Bristol was to continue to grow, the port was in need of seri-

ous modification. In 1239, work began on what in those days would have been a significant feat of civil engineering, the diversion of the River Frome through St Augustine's Marsh (47885c, page 9). This die-straight channel allowed the larger seafaring ships to dock near the castle, while the smaller boats that plied their trade on the Avon, the Frome and, of course, the Severn, continued to moor on the banks of the Avon.

It is hard to believe that at this stage, Bristol was very much a divided town. The walled settlement on the north of the river was part of Gloucestershire, and the area to the



## Bristol's Early History before 1850



south, known as Redcliffe (it was built on a ridge of old red sandstone) belonged to Somerset. The division started to evaporate with the construction of the new stone bridge, now Bristol Bridge (47883c, page 8), which offered obvious benefits to both sides, and was dissolved completely in 1373 when Edward III made the collective area a city in exchange for much-needed funds for his war efforts against France. By now, trade had expanded to the Mediterranean and beyond in goods as diverse as cloth, fruit, sugar and wine.

The end of the 15th century was pivotal to the city's history with the discovery of the

West Indies by Columbus and John Cabot's famous voyage from Bristol to mainland North America. The New World created new opportunities, and trade continued to flourish during the 16th and 17th centuries. Trade stepped up a gear at the start of the 18th century, when the city quickly capitalised on the de-monopolised trade in slaves from Africa, something that has haunted it ever since. These regular triangular voyages across the Atlantic also brought sugar, rum, chocolate and tobacco back to England; the latter two remained synonymous with the city until recent times.

# The Original City, Its Buildings & Development

If the Avon crossing was the seed from which the infant city was to develop, it was par for the course that subsequent growth took place close by. The original walled city, known then as a Borough, anchored itself to the bridge on its southern boundary and spread both north and west from there to nestle against the current city centre and what is now known as Broadmead. It was roughly L-shaped, with five main streets and a church and gate at each entrance. Before its diversion, the Frome

looped pretty much all the way around three walls, with the Avon protecting the fourth to the south.

The castle was built to the east of the original walls, and early expansion was northwards, right up to the Frome. From the 13th century onwards, the developments around the new dock created by the diversion of the Frome shifted the emphasis towards the position occupied by the city centre today. This explains why the High Street, which leads straight into the



Left:

**High Street 1890** 24641c

Right:

**The Theatre Royal 1890**  
24640

This picture shows how little King Street has changed in the last 100 years. The impressive columns of the theatre, the St Nicholas Almshouses next door and even the Duke Hotel, these days known as the Old Duke and a thriving jazz venue, look much the same today. The cobblestones still look just as uneven, but the horse and cart have a lot more room to manoeuvre than anybody would who tries to park a car there now. Out of shot but opposite the Duke Hotel is the Llandogor Trow.





# The Original City, Its Buildings & Development

original city from the bridge, seems somewhat out-of-the-way today (24641c, page 12). The High Street stretched north-west from the bridge, terminating at St John's church. The wooden-fronted buildings we see in the photograph date back to the 16th century, and have changed very little since then. This was the site of Joseph Cottle's original publishing house, which later produced work by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Bristol's own Robert Southey, who was born in Wine Street nearby.

Away from the High Street, most of the important buildings still standing were developed in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Inns sprung up around the docks — the most famous of them, the Llandoger Trow in King Street, is believed to have been the source of inspiration for 'Treasure Island'. (The name comes from a trow, a type of flat-bottomed barge, which ran between Bristol and Llandogo, a small port on the Wye). One particular trow was certainly sailed by a Captain Hawkins. The rest may be



# The Original City, Its Buildings & Development



Above: King Street and the Theatre Royal c1950 B212211

We are looking towards the centre this time, with the only obvious developments in the street since 24640 (pages 12-13) being the addition of some fairly ornate lamp posts and the canopy over the theatre's entrance, which was added in 1903. The original entrance was behind the building.



Left:  
Old St Barts  
Entrance  
c1950 B212195



# The Original City, Its Buildings & Development



## Christmas Street c1950

B212261

The photographer has wandered a little deeper into Christmas Street for this shot, which shows Christmas Steps heading up the right. This once precipitous footpath was a direct route from the docks up to St Michael's church, and it was known, appropriately, as Steppe Street. The steps were built in 1669 by Jonathon Blackwell, an alderman. At the time of the photograph, the shops that lined the steps would have specialised in books and antiques.

speculation. The Theatre Royal also stands on King Street (24640, pages 12-13 and B212211, page 14). The theatre was originally built in 1766, and was modelled on Christopher Wren's original Drury Lane Theatre, long since destroyed. It is the oldest theatre in Britain still in full time use, and it has also become the home of the Old Vic Theatre School.

Photographs B212195 (opposite) and B212261 (above) show Christmas Street, the kind of narrow street that really captures the atmosphere of the old city. St Bartholemew's was originally a hospital built close to the port by sailors in the early 13th century; its entrance archway

can be seen in the centre right of B212195. In 1532 it was sold to finance the foundation of Bristol Grammar School, which later moved to Gaunt's Hospital. The abundance of tobacco advertising is perhaps fitting for a city that made much of its fortune importing it from the United States. Christmas Street was originally known as Knifesmiths' Street.

There were originally two Corn Exchanges; one stood on Narrow Quay, and dealt with grain brought in by boat, and the other was in Wine Street, and handled produce transported overland. These were replaced in 1741 by the graceful building that still dominates the top

# The Original City, Its Buildings & Development

end of Corn Street. It was built by John Wood the Elder of Bath. Outside, on the street itself, we can see another Bristol institution, the Nails. Traders originally used these 3-foot high pillars of bronze as small tables, and this led to the expression 'pay on the nail', which is still heard regularly today. Originally there were six, but only four remain. The original exchanges were demolished, the one on Narrow Quay as late as 1849.

Other 18th-century developments included Queen's Square (B212289, below), named after Queen Anne's visit in 1702. Built on a marsh that was donated by the abbot, it would have once been one of the city's main recreation grounds; sheep grazed upon it until at least the

17th century. Bristol's first all-brick dwelling, St Nicholas's Vicarage, was the first building on the square, which at the time was the second largest in Europe. The striking equestrian statue of William III, which dominates the centre of the park, was built between 1733 and 1736. At one stage, the gardens were dissected diagonally by a main road, but after comprehensive modifications in the 1980s, peace has been restored once more.

Aside from a few of the churches, little is left of the original walled settlement. St John's Gate in Tower Lane is the only gate still standing. The others were all demolished owing to the considerable amount of congestion that they caused.



**Queen's Square c1950** B212289

Once the city's main recreation ground and built on a marsh donated by the abbot, Queen's Square is an incredibly peaceful park – considering how close it is to the city centre. Construction started in the early 18th century with Bristol's first all-brick dwelling. The equestrian statue of William III, which can be seen behind the lamppost, was unveiled in 1736.



# The Development of the Current City Centre

Following the development of the floating harbour in the early 1800s, the diverted River Frome, known now as St Augustine's Reach, became the new City Centre. The river was paved over in part in 1893 (47884, page 18-19), and then it was paved again just before WWII, all over this time, as it is today (B212284, page 24). The 20th century saw it develop into the real commercial centre of the city, with building societies and insurance companies jostling for shop frontage with retailers, inns and even utility providers.

This status was eventually eroded by the development of Broadmead shopping centre after many of the buildings there were destroyed in WWII, but it remains very much the cultural centre with most of the theatres, churches and, of course, the Cathedral within easy walking distance. The recent renovations include statues and flags that are intended to reflect the pride of the people in the city's maritime past.

Photograph 45649c (below) looks along St Augustine's Parade from the bottom of Park Street, and once again shows the amount of



The City Centre 1900 45649c



# The Development of the Current City Centre

'noise' in the city centre from Victorian advertising hoardings. The glasses sign above Husbands the opticians, No 8, is probably the most imaginative. Husbands were founded in 1762, initially making lenses before turning to spectacles. They ceased trading as opticians in 1965 after making a reciprocal deal with Dunscombes, whose sign can be seen next door; they in turn pulled out of the photographic market. The buildings leading away from Husbands have seen little change in the last century, but the rounded building in the centre of the picture, on the corner of Colston Street, has long been replaced with the huge office complex of Colston Tower.

Photograph 47884 (opposite) shows the head of St Augustine's Reach coming right up to the junction with Baldwin Street. The area to the left of the picture was covered over in 1893, and the highest navigable stretch of water was pushed back further in the 1930s, when the remainder of the centre was covered, as it is to this day. It is interesting that the addition of trams to this picture make it seem much more modern than the tightly-cropped version. Trams rattled around Bristol's streets from October 1885 until WWII, when a bomb destroyed the power supply. Their terminus was located near to the area that 47884 was taken from.

In the short period since B212228 (pages 20-21), the car park was replaced with a garden (B212254, page 20); Husbands the opticians, now without the giant glasses sign, repainted their shop front, the light-coloured building at the far end of the block on the left. Dunscombe, now without the 'late Braham' sign of 1900 referring to their founder, has



St Augustine's Bridge 1901 47884

# The Development of the Current City Centre



The junction of Baldwin Street on the right and Clare Street on the left, with Broad Quay in the foreground. This view looks right into the heart of the original walled city, with Corn Street continuing on from Clare Street to the High Street; we can see the three churches of St Nicholas to the right, All Saints in the centre and Christ Church to the left. The picture was taken from a building in St Augustine's Parade.



# The Development of the Current City Centre

## Above Right: The City Centre c1948

B212228

This was taken from a similar position to 45649, but 50 years later; there are some significant changes, most noticeably the motor car. The island splitting St Augustine's Reach and Broad Quay, used here as a car park, was created by covering the Frome, which was still navigable in some of the earlier shots. With the exception of the car park, which was later made into a small garden, this was the shape of the city centre until the recent extensive modifications in the late 1990s.



# The Development of the Current City Centre



moved to the other side of Denmark Street. The layout of the centre here changed little through the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s. The amount of traffic is noticeably increasing by this time, and double-decker buses are obviously doing a roaring trade.

In B212256 (below), the photographer has crossed the Centre to show clearly the gardens mentioned in the previous shot, as well as the view up Colston Street to the Colston Hall. The commercialisation of the area has now started to get up a head of steam, and the chain stores have begun to move in, led by Boots the Chemists – they still occupy the same spot. Apart from this, the names may have changed, but the scene as far as the Colston Hall will be familiar to anyone who visits the Centre today. The Gas Board, who at this time are in Colston Street in the centre of the shot, occupies the building now used by the Tourist Information Centre.



Far Left:  
The City  
Centre  
c1950  
B212254

Left:  
The City  
Centre  
c1950  
B212256

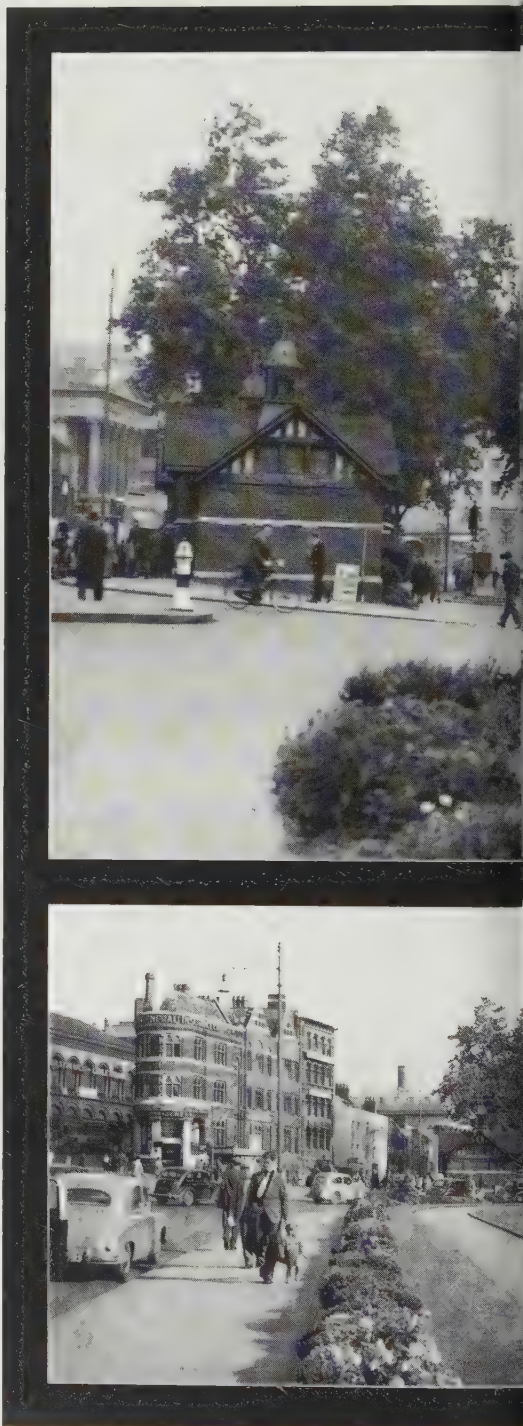


# The Development of the Current City Centre

From the same series of shots, B212264 (below left) shows cars turning right onto what was once St Augustine's Bridge (47884, page 18-19). This was actually a drawbridge from 1827 to 1893, when the first stone bridge was built. The curved building on the junction with Colston Street is here occupied by the General Insurance Corporation. This was replaced in 1973 by one of the centre's most distinctive high-rise office blocks, Colston Tower. The Colston Hall, left, has had a somewhat chequered past. It was originally built in 1867 and has been used for a number of different purposes, including a cinema. It escaped the wars unscathed, but then burnt down shortly afterwards. It was rebuilt as a concert theatre by the then city architect, J Nelson Meredith.

The flags and giant crown to the left of B212279 (opposite) mark the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, but other than that, little has changed since the last few shots. This picture, taken from the junction of College Green and St Augustine's Parade, shows how little the buildings along Broad Quay have changed in the last 50 years. The Sedan Chair, a hotel in 47885c (page 9), boasts a huge banner for George's beers (B212279, opposite). Phillip George was one of seven merchants who bought a malthouse on Tucker Street in the early 19th century and started brewing beer. The company, known as the Phillip George Bristol Brewery, went on to dominate the Bristol brewery scene in the 1950s before amalgamating with Courage in 1961.

The final shot in this coronation year series, B212284 (page 24-25), is an aerial view taken from somewhere near the present Bristol and West building, probably from the old





# The Development of the Current City Centre



**Above Left: The City Centre c1950**  
B212259

Here we see Colston Avenue from St Augustine's Bridge. The light-coloured building flying the row of flags (right), probably in celebration of the Festival of Britain, belongs to the Bristol and West Building Society, who were to remain on the Centre for some time, eventually constructing another of the area's distinctive tower blocks on Broad Quay in 1968. The colonnade on the far left is the church of St Mary on the Quay, which would have been right on the quay at the time it was built in 1839.

**Below Left: The City Centre c1950**  
B212264

**Below Right: The City Centre c1953** B212279



# The Development of the Current City Centre

Above Right:  
**The City Centre c1953**  
B212284

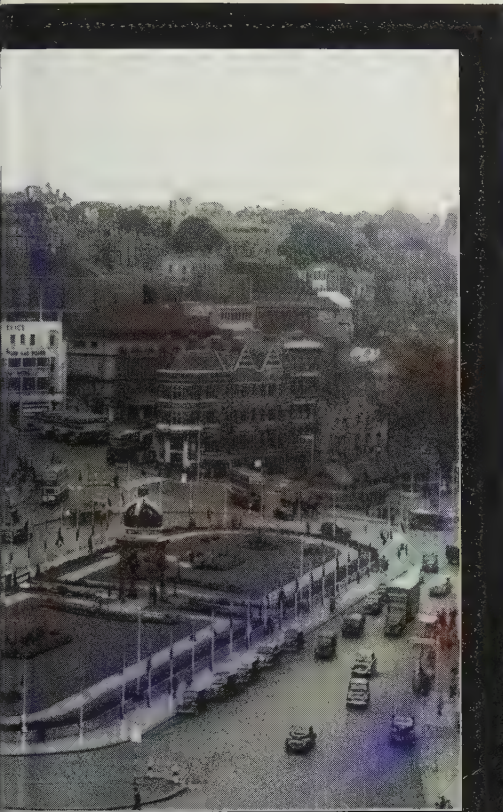
Below Left:  
**The City Centre c1960**  
B212319

Ten years on, and Husbands the opticians still hug the corner of the Centre; but they now share the block with a lot of new names, Maynards and Berni's perhaps being the best known. The Hippodrome has lost its tower, and the skyline is now dominated by the new buildings of the Bristol Royal Infirmary. The photographer must have been very early or very lucky to capture the scene without any traffic.





# The Development of the Current City Centre



Co-operative Wholesale Society building, which once stood at the end of Narrow Quay. The layout of the centre is clear to see, and so are the celebration flags and crown. In addition to Boots, both Dolcis and Timpson can be seen along St Augustine's Parade. The Hippodrome, to the left of Dolcis, opened in 1912; like the Colston Hall, it has had a chequered history. Note the large tower and giant ball above the theatre — these were removed in 1964. The picture also affords a great view back to St Michael's Hill with the tower of the Royal Fort, the physics wing of the University, on the skyline, and St Michael's church just peeping over the horizon to the right.

Below Right:

## **The City Centre c1953 B212280**

This is another photograph from coronation year, taken a little further up towards College Green than B212279 (page 23) and more tightly cropped to show another financial services company, the Halifax Building Society, adding to the already large financial presence in the centre with their offices on the far left. The giant crown shows clearly in the centre of the picture. In all of these shots, the presence of the impressive tower of St Stephen's Church towering above the buildings is clear to see. This is another spectacle that has changed little to the present day.

## College Green and Park Street

A small but pretty garden, dominated by the splendour of the Cathedral, College Green feels like an oasis of peace amongst the chaos of the city centre. The gardens make an apt divide between the eye-catching architecture of the Cathedral and the Central Library and one of the city's most spectacular streets, Park Street. The neo-Georgian sweep of the Council House building only adds to the grandeur of the scene – see B212299 (page 29).

The scene we see in 20128 (below) is almost recognisable to this day, with the sweep of Park Street to the right and the triangular shape of the green itself – at the time of the photograph it was surrounded by railings and fronted by a replica of the High Cross. The original High Cross, these days housed in Stourhead, was built in celebration of the charter of Edward III

which granted city status to Bristol; it used to stand in Corn Street. The upper tiers of the cross were added in 1633, and it was moved to this spot in 1733. It was sold to Stourhead 30 years later, and the replica still stands in Berkley Square, at the top of Park Street.

The Cathedral was built on the site of the original Augustinian abbey, which was founded by Robert Fitzharding in 1140. The land occupied by the present green acted as a burial ground for the abbey and the nearby St Mark's Hospital in those days, so development to the area faced considerable opposition. The current layout has existed since 1991.

Only a few years after 20142 (opposite) was taken, Bristol Cathedral was significantly altered with the addition of the new towers (below right). These, along with a new nave, were added in anticipation of the reinstating of



College Green 1887 20128



# College Green and Park Street



Above: The Cathedral from College Green 1887 20142

The earliest in a sequence of shots of the Cathedral shows the ornate building at the time when it no longer held cathedral status.



Left:  
The  
Cathedral  
from College  
Green c1890  
24636

## College Green and Park Street



**St Augustine's Gate**  
1896 38173

This was originally an abbot's gateway. Notice the two arches: the larger was for horses and carriages and the smaller for pedestrians. The upper tiers were rebuilt in the 16th century, and then the whole structure was extensively renovated in the 1800s. It looks just as impressive to this day.

cathedral status. Looking at the photograph, it is difficult to believe that the cathedral had been allowed to become so run-down earlier in the century.

The views from the Cabot Tower (opposite) look over College Green and the city. Photograph 45562 shows just how much presence the Cathedral, complete with its new towers, once had. Also visible is the High Cross replica, the prominent spire of St Mary Redcliffe church, and just to the left of it, the distinctive shape of a glass-making dome. Most of Bristol's glass-making moved out of the city during the 19th and 20th centuries to surrounding towns such as Nailsea, which

became synonymous with the industry. Photograph B212299 is a very similar view to 45562, but the area is now dominated by the new Council House. Work started on this in 1935 against considerable opposition due to its proximity to the High Cross and Cathedral Close. Recent developments, including the closure of the road in front of the cathedral, have gone a long way to restoring the balance and making the cathedral the focal point once more. Note that the glass-making dome has now been demolished. The buildings of the original walled city would have occupied an area defined loosely by the group of steeples and towers in the centre of the picture.



## College Green and Park Street



Above: From the Cabot Tower 1900 45562

Below: From the Cabot Tower c1960 B212299



# College Green and Park Street

Above Right:  
**Park Street c1950**

B212226

How little this scene has changed since this shot was taken. The University tower holds centre stage at the top of the hill. It was designed by Sir George Oatley, and completed in 1925. The street was originally named after Bullock's Park.

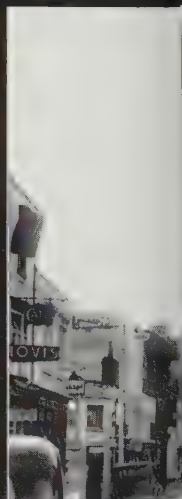


Below Left:  
**Park Street c1950**

B212270

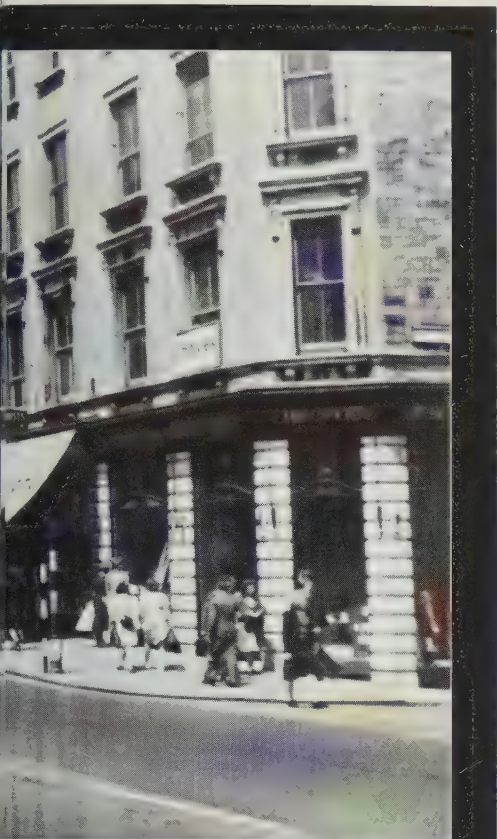
Below Right:  
**The University c1955**

B212296





## College Green and Park Street



Making a direct assault on the slope above the green, Park Street (B212226, opposite) still manages to maintain a certain dignity, despite being one of the city's busiest shopping streets. It was devastated during the blitzes of WWII and rebuilt afterwards, which explains the different styles of architecture. Crowned distinctively with the imposing Gothic tower of the university, it acts as a fitting causeway between the bustle of the centre and the more relaxed atmosphere of Clifton, which spreads out from the top of the precipitously steep hill.



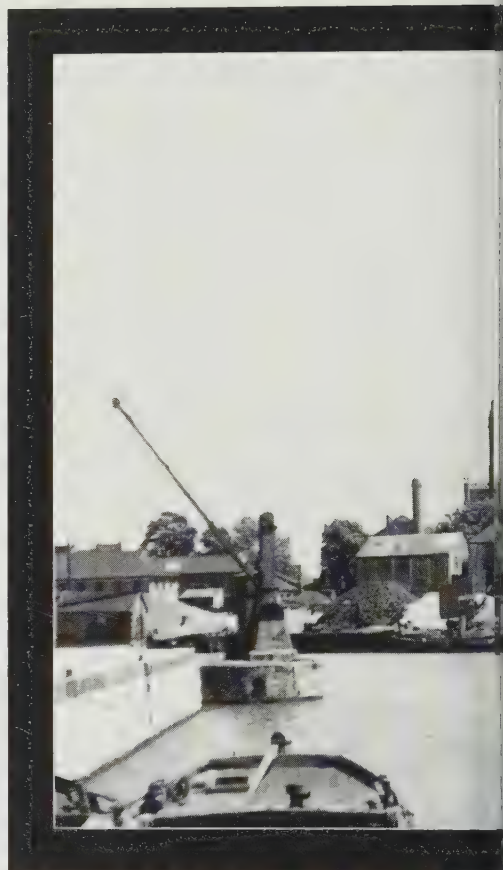
We now go up Park Street. Photograph B212270 (opposite) is similar to B212226, but the photographer has moved up the hill a little and chosen a much wider angle that flattens the hill slightly. To the left is the front of the Mauretania, a lounge bar ran by Averys, one of Bristol's biggest wine importers. The company was established in 1793 and the bar was opened next to their original premises in 1936, using fittings from the ship of the same name. The neon lights still brighten the bottom of the street today. The magnificent tower of the university is a lot closer in B212296 (opposite) as the photographer looks from Park Row up towards Queens Road and The Triangle. Behind the tower we can see the front of the building that now houses the city Museum and Art Gallery. Notice the offices of C J Hole & Sons on the left, opposite the university. Originally founded in 1876 as a rent-collecting agency, the company's original Queen Street offices were bombed in the war, and the company moved to Park Street. They remain one of the district's largest estate agents.

# The Docks and the River Avon

**T**he rivers and the docks that shaped the early city then went on to become the life-blood of its continued commercial success. Following the 13th-century diversion of the Frome, the main dock would have lain along St Augustine's Reach as far as the castle walls. Smaller ships, used mainly for river trade, would have continued to use the Avon around Welsh Back. Things continued along these lines until the early 1800s, when William Jessop started work on the floating harbour. Completed in 1809 and built by a labour force which included French prisoners of war, the new dock, which achieved its constant water levels by the use of a series of locks, increased the docks' capacity considerably. However, it was prone to silting, a problem that was eventually solved by Isambard Kingdom Brunel some half a century later.

The port had a huge bearing on everything that went on in the city. As well as the obvious import opportunities, local businesses were also very quick to catch on to any potential export markets. Over the years Bristol excelled in the production of wool, fine cloth, iron products such as cannons and anchors, soap, and glass, to name just a few. The docks also became a hub for domestic trade, with good links to South Wales, the Midlands and the West Country. Coal distribution featured throughout the centuries, with locally-mined coal gradually being replaced by larger quantities from the developing coalfields of South Wales (B212202, above).

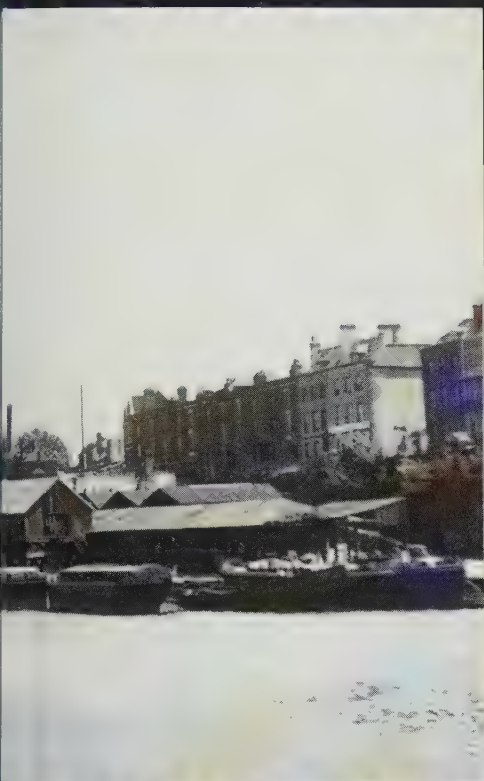
Overall though, it was raw imports and their subsequent conversion to consumer products that shaped the recent commercial history of the city. Three particular industries remain



synonymous with Bristol almost to the present day: chocolate, tobacco and sherry. In 1761, Joseph Fry bought a machine to manufacture chocolate from cocoa imported from the West Indies. By 1908, Frys employed over 4,500 people. In 1639 the London Virginia Tobacco Company lost their monopoly on tobacco imports, and Bristol was quick to capitalise on the opportunity; by 1690, tobacco imports made up 10-15% of the port's trade. Out of these imports rose one company, Wills Tobacco, which started production in the early 1780s and grew into a huge corporation over the next century. The other industry closely



# The Docks and the River Avon



**Above Left: The Docks and St Mary Redcliffe Church c1950 B212202**

Taken from somewhere near Redcliffe Bridge, this shot shows the houses lining the Redcliffe Wharves on the right and the impressive spire of St Mary Redcliffe in the centre. This is close to the spot where the replica of John Cabot's ship, the 'Matthew', is now docked. Note the coal on the river bank beneath the church. At this time this was probably imported from South Wales, as most local coal production ceased in the early 1900s.

**Below: The Docks c1950 B212221**

This is a similar view to B212202, but taken back towards Prince's Street Bridge. The inlet on the left is the entrance to one of the mud docks that have now lent their name to a huge cycle shop and café based in one of the old warehouses. Redcliffe Parade stands proudly beside the cranes on the right.



# The Docks and the River Avon

Above Right: **The Docks**  
c1950 B212218

We are looking towards Prince's Wharf, with Narrow Quay on the left and the end of the transit sheds, later converted to the Watershed, on the right. The load on the boats in the front could be sugar beet.

Below Left: **The Docks** c1950  
B212222

A similar shot to B212218, this one looks across to the cranes and sheds where the Watershed now stands. At about this spot, Pero's Bridge, one of Bristol's Millennium projects, spans the reach. Often known as the horned bridge, it was named after an African slave, one of thousands who suffered in the hands of Bristol's traders during the 18th century.

Below Left: **The Docks** 1960  
B212318

How much more vibrant this scene looks today. The Watershed and Exhibition Centre are on the right and Princes Wharf, now a maritime museum, straight ahead.





# The Docks and the River Avon



linked to the city grew from a family wine importer, Harveys. Production of sherry, or Bristol Milk, as it was then known, began during the late 1700s, and the company then went on to total market domination. The original bottling plant, on the corner of Denmark Street, is now the well-known Harvey's Restaurant.

Other noteworthy developments in the city's industrious maritime career include the formation of the Society of Merchant Venturers in 1552: a great many of Bristol's venturers, concerned about the number of amateurs interfering with the city's trade, were granted a charter from Edward VI to secure the trade for themselves and, in theory, the city. Perhaps the city's most famous shipping son is Samuel Plimsoll, 'the sailors' friend,' whose concerns about safety on overloaded ships led to the development of the Plimsoll Line. This was a horizontal line around the ship's girth which marked the maximum safe water level when the ship was fully laden. This in turn led to the



# The Docks and the River Avon



From the Granary 1901

47880c

Grain was very important to the city – indeed, there were two corn exchanges at one time. Early trading would have taken place by the original High Cross in Corn Street, but by the 17th century, it had moved to buildings in Wine Street and Narrow Quay. This shot shows the Cabot Tower clearly dominating the skyline.

1876 Merchant Shipping Act, and saved countless lives.

The decline of the shipping trade in the city centre was brought about by two things. Firstly, high docking charges, often twice those of Liverpool or London, meant that it could be cheaper to unload elsewhere and then ship the cargo by rail. And secondly, as ships grew ever bigger, the tight confines of the River Avon became more and more challenging to navigate safely. The Bristol Corporation attempted to

halt the decline by opening Avonmouth Docks in 1877 and another port at Portishead two years later, but it was too little too late, and Bristol's shipping heyday was over. All subsequent development has taken place at the mouth of the Avon, climaxing with the grand opening of the Royal Portbury Dock by Queen Elizabeth II in 1977. With berths for ships of up to 70,000 tonnes and nearby motorway and rail links, Bristol is once again set to be a major player in UK shipping.



# The City's Religious History and its Churches

**D**espite the fact that church spires dominate the skyline, historic Bristol lacked any specific ecclesiastical ties and was self-governed and independent, ruled more by commerce than spiritual beliefs. That said, wealthy merchants certainly poured a lot of money into the churches of the area; St Mary Redcliffe is a fine example (20154, below).

There is much debate about which was Bristol's first church. There was certainly a Benedictine monastery at Westbury-on-Trym around the year 800AD. At the time of the Norman invasion, the then Saxon borough came

under the diocese of Worcester, and the Normans quickly set about 'cleaning up' the existing, somewhat corrupt, clergy; Wulfstan (or Wulstan), the canon of Worcester, rose above this, being an undisputedly good man. It was his work that helped bring an end to the little-known trade of selling English slaves to Ireland.

Bristol's commercial success played a huge role in the church from then on. The cathedral, originally an Augustinian abbey, was founded in 1140 by Robert Fitzharding with the wealth he gained from his loyalty to Matilda during the

**St Mary  
Redcliffe  
Church 1887**  
20154

Built on a ridge of sandstone that gave the area its name, St Mary Redcliffe was the centrepiece of the borough of Redcliffe, which until the 13th century was completely independent of Bristol. It is one of only two British churches to have stone vaulting.



# The City's Religious History and its Churches

## **Right: St Mary Redcliffe Church 1887 20158**

Described by Elizabeth I as the 'fairest, goodliest and most famous parish church in England', St Mary Redcliffe was built on the riches of Bristol's merchants. Its biggest benefactor, William Canynges, once a mayor of the city, is laid to rest within.

## **Far Right: St Mary Redcliffe Church, the Nave looking East 1887 20156**

The church is larger and grander than many cathedrals. Note the stone vaulting.



civil war. The Order of the Knights Templar also benefited from the civil war, using money and land donated by Robert, Earl of Gloucester to fund their small temple church south of the borough walls.

There were 16 churches in early times in and around the old walled settlement. They all saw a period of prosperity during the 14th and 15th centuries, when generous merchants, pockets swelling almost daily with Bristol's increasing importing and exporting trade, lavished them with funding. Perhaps the finest of all the Bristol parish churches, St Mary Redcliffe (20158 and 20156, above), was to spring up in

this way. The building, larger and grander than many small cathedrals, was once described by Queen Elizabeth I as 'the fairest, goodliest and most famous parish church in England'. It was originally constructed in the 13th century on a natural rise of old red sandstone that gave the area its name. The wealthy merchant William Canynges, many times mayor, bestowed much of his fortune to the church before joining the clergy himself. His tomb is still housed there. The famous 285ft spire was added in 1872.

During the 15th century, Holy Cross or Temple Church, with its famous leaning tower, was built on marshy land on the site of the



# The City's Religious History and its Churches



Knights Templar's original temple. At the time of the Reformation in the early 16th century, Bristol had 16 churches, an abbey, two priories and four houses of friars.

Henry VIII's Reformation hit Bristol hard, with most of the monasteries and all of the friaries closing under the new rules. Then, after a volte face on the part of Henry VIII, the Diocese of Bristol was founded in 1529, and the abbey church was granted cathedral status. This finally united the churches on both sides of the river, which had been previously split between the Midland Diocese of Worcester and the Somerset Diocese of Wells. Bristol actually

played its own part in the turbulence of the times: a leading figure in the Reformation, William Tyndale, was originally based in nearby Little Sodbury, 10 miles to the north of the city, and it is possible that he may have actually made some of his translation of the Bible on College Green.

The city benefited from Elizabeth I's option to take the middle ground between Rome and the Protestants. By the late 16th century, things were much as they are today, with many sermons preached in English, and prayer books being introduced for the first time.

Little changed during the 18th century,

# The City's Religious History and its Churches

## The Cathedral 1900

45569

Here we have a clear view of the newly-added western towers. This shot was taken from the area in front of St Augustine's Gate, which can just be seen on the far right. These days photographers have problems with electrical and telecommunications wires, but here the problem is caused by the power lines for the trams.



although the city did briefly become home to another hugely influential evangelist, John Wesley. In 1739, after returning from a failed mission to the United States, he set up his first Methodist Chapel, the New Room, in the Horsefair. Wesley himself laid an inscribed stone, too high to be a foundation stone, which can still be seen today.

The cathedral (45569, above) was one of the most poorly funded in England. In 1539 it was declared unsafe, and the nave was taken down. It operated without one until the end of the 19th century. By the early 1800s, it had

become an embarrassment to Bristol's businessmen, and then, as if to rub salt into the wounds, in 1836 it lost its status completely. The Tamworth Manifesto declared that Dorset should rejoin the Diocese of Salisbury, and Bristol, now without a Bishop's palace as a result of the 1831 riots, was to become part of a joint diocese with Gloucester. Fortunately, things had turned around again by the middle of the century; a new nave was constructed and two splendid towers were added between 1868 and 1897, in anticipation of its status being restored.



# Clifton, Its Buildings and Development

**T**he suspension bridge (20169, below, and B212251, page 43) is Bristol's most famous and most dramatic landmark. It was designed by the very young Brunel as an entry for a competition in which he beat established engineers of the calibre of Thomas Telford – it was actually his second design. The project was originally funded by money left by William Vick in 1752, but despite the first stone being laid in 1836, the project ran out of funds and work was halted in 1843. It was eventually completed in 1864 after its designer's death, using chains from a bridge he had designed for Hungerford. In B212251 (page 43) few discernible changes are visible. The photograph was taken from near the observatory.

Clifton is Bristol's most attractive suburb, and its growth was spurred on by the success of the rapidly-growing city and the attraction of the Hotwells Spa, which sat directly beneath Clifton. It would be fair to say that it sprang up around leisure rather than business, something that the rather random labyrinth of roads and alleyways bears out admirably to this day.

The baths of the Hotwells Spa were first used in the 15th century, but they reached their commercial peak around 1675. At this time, Clifton was little more than a cluster of large houses, retreats for wealthy Bristol merchants, a church and a few hotels and guesthouses for visitors to the spa. The end of the 1800s saw Clifton attempt to capitalise on a spa of its own



Clifton, The Suspension Bridge 1887 20169

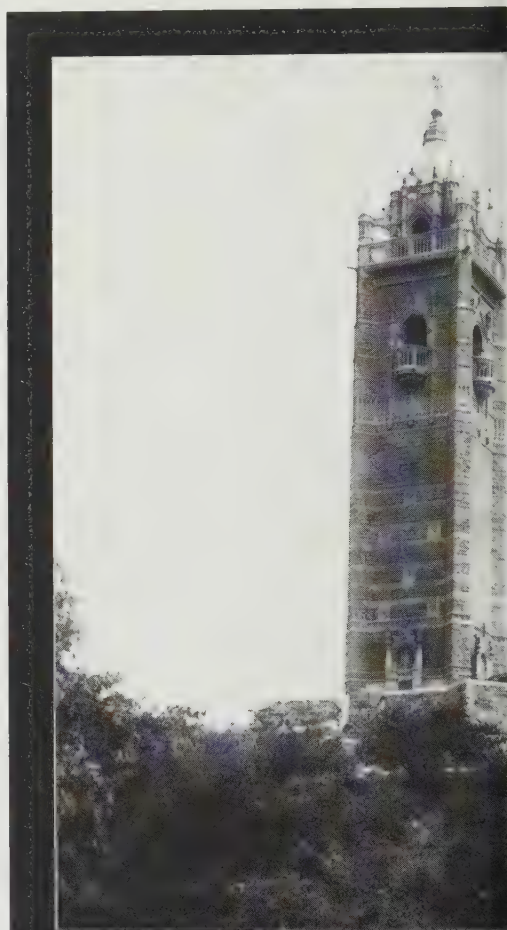
# Clifton, Its Buildings and Development

but it never really achieved the success of Hotwells, let alone Bath, which was a major attraction by that time. By 1790, prosperous Clifton was in the grip of a huge building boom; but it did not last long, and ground to a halt only a few years later as many of the businesses went under. Witness accounts from the time describe the suburb as something of a ghost town, with half-finished buildings decaying around the debris that was created in their construction.

Things picked up again by around 1810, and during the following 50 years, Clifton grew beyond recognition. Most of its lavish Georgian and Grecian architecture dates back to this period, and although it never really rivalled Bath in splendour, it certainly boasts some stunning buildings; the highlights include the impressive sweep of Royal York Crescent.

The same period was responsible for the developments further up Park Street from College Green, including the Queens Road, Royal Parade and Berkley Square, which to this day maintains an air of Georgian grandeur. During the same period, in 1835, Clifton was finally incorporated into the city.

The highest point of the city, and probably its greatest viewpoint, the Cabot Tower (B212206 and 45565, opposite) is a must-see on any visitor's itinerary. It was completed in 1897 to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Cabot's historical voyage to discover North America. Often thought of as a local, Cabot was actually Giovanni Caboto, a Venetian, who having spent some time in Spain, had heard about Columbus's successes. He discussed them with Henry II, who was keen to explore, but also keen to keep on the right side of the Spanish.



Right:

**Clifton, The Suspension Bridge**

**c1950 B212251**



# Clifton, Its Buildings and Development



Far Left:  
**The Cabot Tower**  
1900 45565

Left:  
**The Cabot Tower**  
c1950 8212206

This shot of the tower shows a little of the park, which remains a peaceful and pretty haven to this day.



# Clifton, Its Buildings and Development



Left:

**Clifton, The Promenade 1887**  
20178

A leafy walkway, on the edge of the Downs that remains as pretty and as popular as ever. The huge beech trees provide shade in the summer, shelter in winter and some fantastic colours in autumn.

Below:

**Clifton, The Promenade 1901**  
46507

A similar shot to 20178, this one in landscape format, shows how little this area changed at the turn of the century. It does not look too different today.





# Clifton, Its Buildings and Development

With this in mind, Cabot agreed to sail on a more northerly course than Columbus, which meant that he passed to the north of the newly-discovered West Indies, and eventually set foot on the shores of the 'New World' on 24 June 1497. He first landed in Nova Scotia before moving along the coast to Newfoundland.

Christ Church dominates the horizon in 20160 (below), taken from the area of the Downs known as the Celtic Fields. The Downs, as fine

a park as you could ask for so close to the centre of such a busy city, were given to the people by the Society of Merchant Venturers on the basis that the Downs would remain a public space forever. The grass was actually grazed by sheep until 1924. Looking across Clifton (38165, pages 46-47) we can easily make out the two highest points in the city: on the right is the Cabot Tower and on the left is Christ Church. This view has changed little to this day.



Clifton, From the Downs 1887 20160

# Clifton, Its Buildings and Development

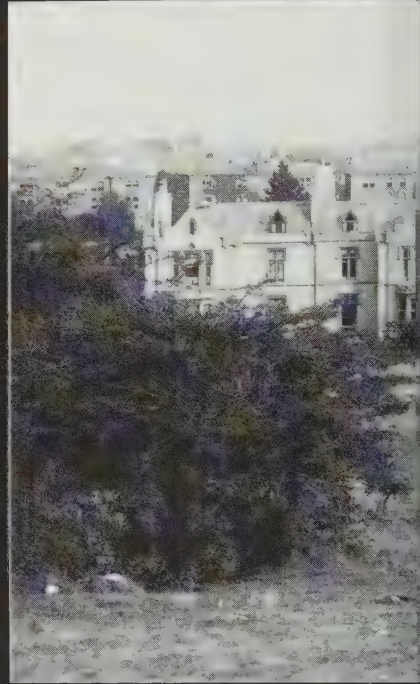
Above Right: **Clifton, view from the Downs 1896** 38165

Below Left: **Clifton, The Drinking Fountain on the Downs 1896** 38164

This wonderfully ornate Gothic fountain sits at the end of the Promenade, close to the Bridge Valley Road. It was built in 1861 as a tribute to Alderman Procter for his work and generosity to the people of the city.

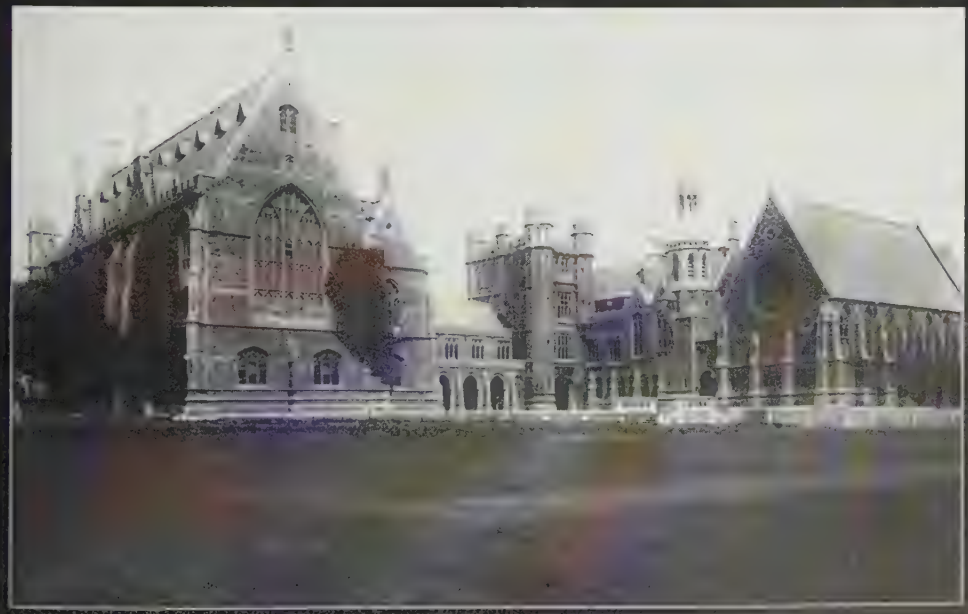
Below Right: **Clifton, Clifton College 1901** 46504

Clifton College was designed by Charles Hanson. Founded in 1860 and opened in 1862, it took both boarders and local boys, unusual for the time. It served as General Omar Bradley's headquarters during WWII. The cricket pitch in front of the building is famous for an all-time record innings of 628 not out by A E J Collins in 1899.





# Clifton, Its Buildings and Development



# Clifton, Its Buildings and Development



Clifton, The Old Parish Church 1887 20184

Clifton's old parish church (20184, above) was one of the few Bristol churches not to be rebuilt after being destroyed by bombs. This grand building was devastated in a blitz in 1940. Christchurch was originally built in 1841; note the clean lines of its impressive steeple, which makes it one of the highest buildings on the Bristol skyline. The steeple was added by J Norton in 1859. It towers above one of the most beautiful areas in the whole city: a peaceful green, lined with impressive buildings, leads away from it to the southern pier of the suspension bridge.

Bristol Zoo (B212310, page 51), which origi-

nally opened in 1835, still occupies the same space on Clifton Down, and the entrance, with its fine silhouettes of Noah's animals marching towards the ark, is still easily recognisable. The façade may not have changed, but the emphasis of the establishment certainly has; these days, the main objective is research rather than entertainment, although it is still a wonderful place to wander around – there are stunning gardens as well as the more obvious exhibits. Over the years it has housed some real celebrities, the best-known being Alfred the gorilla and Rosie the Indian elephant.

Today Clifton remains aloof and leisurely,



# Clifton, Its Buildings and Development



Clifton, Christchurch 1887-20183

# Clifton, Its Buildings and Development

due in no small part to its uniform Georgian architecture and superb location looking down over the bustle of the city below. It boasts some of Bristol's finest shops, restaurants and bars as well as the Downs, which has to be the city's finest park, and of course, the magnificent suspension bridge.

The view looking towards the city from the banks of the Avon (B212187, page 52) is a scene

that has changed little to this day. The tennis courts were built on the site of an old quarry; the Avon Gorge's limestone cliffs were quarried for many years. The tunnel on the right is penetrated by the Bristol & Portishead Pier Railway Line, a rail link with Portishead, at the mouth of the Avon. The railway was converted to standard gauge in 1880 and was acquired by the Great Western Railway in 1884.



**Clifton, The Downs Hotel 1887 20182**

No longer a hotel, this impressive building, originally constructed in 1865, has changed very little to this day. It faces the suspension bridge and the top station of the Clifton Rocks railway.



# Clifton, Its Buildings and Development



Above: Clifton, Bristol Zoo c1960 B212310

Below: Detail showing Entrance Frieze



# Clifton, Its Buildings and Development



Above: **The Tennis Courts c1950** B212187

Below: **Hotwells and the Suspension Bridge c1950** C120190

As we look along the Portway towards the bridge, we can see the colonnade which once stood next to the Hotwells Spa, and the rock buttress that was penetrated by the Clifton Rocks Railway. This scene has changed little to this day.





## Broadmead

Since the mid 1950s, people visiting Bristol for the first time would be forgiven for thinking that the city was centred around the sombre concrete buildings of Broadmead shopping centre (B212332, below). It is hard to imagine that what is now the city's main shopping area was little more than a large meadow, or broad mead, throughout the Middle Ages. In these days it was known as Newport Meadow, and it was the site of a Benedictine priory as well as one of the city's oldest churches, St James's, which was founded around 1140. The priory was suppressed in the 16th century and its buildings

were converted into a manor house, which was later sold for use as a sugar refinery.

The current shopping centre backs up onto the site of the once grand Norman castle, now Castle Park. The building was demolished brick by brick in 1655 and the bricks were then used to make the foundations for the aptly named Castle Street, which went on to become the main shopping street before the WWII bombs. What is left of the castle today can be seen in the park.

People first lived in Broadmead around the time of the 1373 charter that declared Bristol a city, but development was slow, and the area



**Bond Street c1950** B212332

This shot really emphasises the sombre, grey, unsympathetic architecture of Bristol's post-war shopping street development. We are looking towards the M32 from beneath what is now Avon House North.

# Broadmead

was still described as a 'spacious meadow' by William Wyrcester in his diary of 1428. It was the churches that wrote most of Broadmead's history over the next few centuries, with the building of Quakers Friars by the Society of Friends in 1670 and of course, Wesley's New Room, the home of the Methodist Church, which was built in 1739. Other major events of the time have been immortalised by street names such as Haymarket and The Horsefair (B212320, opposite). The horse fair was a huge event in the Middle Ages, and it attracted crowds from all over the country.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Broadmead became a major coaching centre and shopping area for people coming from out of town. Old coaching inns would be popular places now, but the only one still standing in its original form is the Greyhound, which was built in 1620 — it was one of the few buildings in the area to survive the blitz. These days its entrance is next to the Galleries.

By the early 20th century, Castle Street and Wine Street would have been throbbing with shoppers, and Union Street, too, would have been very busy, with Fry's chocolate factory



**St James Barton c1960** B212327

The curved building which now houses Debenhams is a slight relief to the eyes in an otherwise concrete jungle. Note the houses directly ahead on the left of the picture. This view now would be dominated by Avon House North, which was built as the offices for the newly-formed and short-lived Avon County Council in 1970.





### The Horsefair c1960 B212320

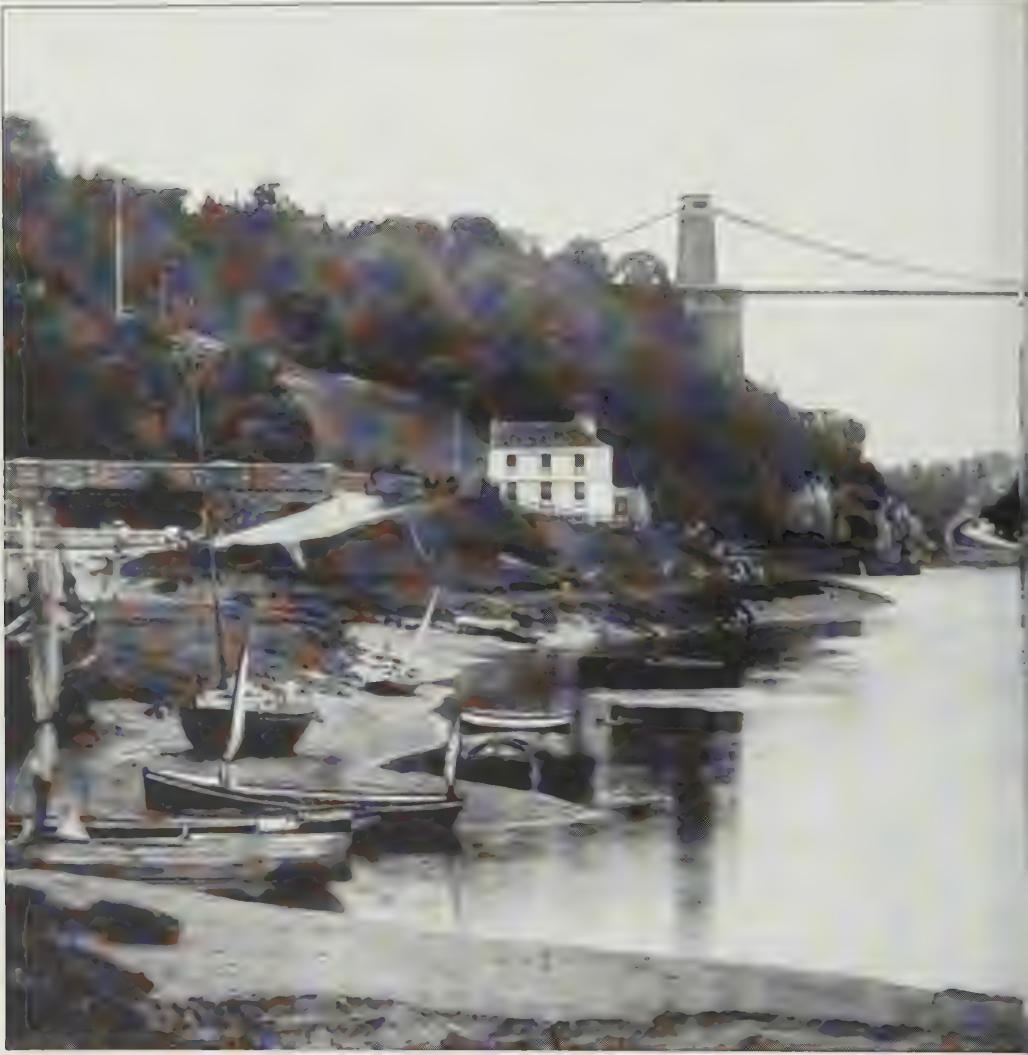
Here we see more dull grey concrete on a street named after a very different and far more colourful event. This shot looks from near the current Macdonald's towards the slightly more upscale buildings of Debenhams and John Lewis.

dominating proceedings at the bottom of the hill. This later became a cinema when the company moved to Keynsham in 1924. Things remained fairly static then until 1940, when bombs changed the face of the city forever.

After the war, Park Street was rebuilt, but a decision was taken not to rebuild the Castle Street and Wine Street areas. Instead, a brand new shopping centre was constructed. Original plans favoured a car-free precinct with four huge piazzas and small roads servicing the shops from the rear. Unfortunately, the businesses were unable to imagine a world where

their customers could not park outside their front doors, and objected to the scheme; the service roads were all widened at the expense of the piazzas, which became nothing more than dingy car parks. With different retailers commissioning different architects, and few planning restrictions, the 1950s saw Broadmead grow into the cold and uninspiring place that it is today. Fortunately, over recent years development has become a little more tasteful — and ironically, the most successful trading area now is actually a precinct, known, of course, as the Galleries.

# Transport



**T**he main mode of transport to the end of the 18th century was, of course, the river; but this has been well documented elsewhere in this book. Roads also played a key role in the city's fortunes during the 18th century. Up until then, most of the roads had been unpaved, and were often in a dreadful state, so much so that goods were often transported on sledges rather than

wheels. In 1726, the Bristol Corporation gained permission to take over the city's roads. They set about building turnpikes at major junctions and entrances, such as Hotwells and Ashton Gate. These early toll roads were very unpopular, and plans to charge for crossing Bristol Bridge were greeted with days of rioting until they were dropped. Nevertheless, other tolls continued until 1867.





## The Suspension Bridge from South of the River 1887 20163

All it would need is an aeroplane in the sky and this picture would sum up the whole Bristol transport network. The bridge, as always, dominates the scene, but also visible is the early Bridge Valley Road, sweeping up around the buttress that drops down from the right-hand tower. Boats, albeit small ones, line the river, and the lower bridge on the left spans the Bristol to Portishead Railway line.

Pivotal in the development of Bristol's road network was a Scotsman called John Macadam. Having made his fortune in America, Macadam moved to the city in the early 19th century. He took over the responsibility for the roads, and by 1816 he was in charge of 146 miles. His process of paving roads using a mixture of gravel and crushed stones, compounded by heavy rollers, improved things beyond recogni-

tion — the process became known as Macadamisation. He eventually fell out with the Corporation, and in 1825 he left to work in London. His legacy, further improved by the addition of tar, and known today as tarmac, or tarmacadam, has changed road construction forever.

By the end of the 19th century, vehicles were moving away from horse power and turning to

# Transport

## The Suspension Bridge from South of the River 1887 20165

Another view showing the Bristol transport network in full flow, with ships on the Avon, the suspension bridge holding centre stage and the Bristol & Portishead Pier Railway line dominating the foreground. There has been talk of reopening the railway line as a link to the docks at the mouth of the Avon.



steam. Many of the bigger businesses, such as Fry's and George's, owned fleets of steam-powered lorries, and new haulage companies were set up to make the most of the boom. As the internal combustion engine took over early in the 1900s, the first charabancs started to appear on the streets. This development led to

the formation of the Bristol Motor Company, which later went on to become Bristol Commercial Vehicles then the Bristol Omnibus Company. The city also had its own motorcycle manufacturer in the shape of Douglas Motorcycles, who operated out of a red-brick factory in Kingswood.





The city's spectacular road developments continued into the 1960s and beyond. The intricate collection of flyovers and bridges that surround the Cumberland basin were built in 1965, and include the largest swing-bridge in the UK. All the streets and bridges are named after influential local figures such as Plimsoll

and Macadam. The motorway network followed shortly afterwards, and links to South Wales, once a regular voyage by boat for the Romans of Sea Mills, were much improved by the building of the two Severn Crossings. The first opened in 1966 and the second in 2000.

When it comes to transport development in

# Transport

Bristol, one name stands out above all the rest: Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Although he was not actually from Bristol, his work changed the face of the city forever. As well as designing the Clifton suspension bridge, and making improvements to the floating harbour, he also built the city's most famous ship, the SS 'Great Britain', the world's first ocean-going propeller ship. At the same time, he set about producing one of the finest railway networks the country had ever seen. The original proposal for the

rail link with London was drawn up in 1824, and the first train rolled along the Great Western Railway as far as Bath some 16 years later. It ran from the newly-built Temple Meads Station, one of his finest pieces of work and the oldest surviving railway station in the world.

By 1844, Bristol's rail links reached to Exeter and Gloucester; the Gloucester line was further extended to Birmingham ten years later. Another remarkable engineering feat at the



**Clifton, The Clifton Rocks Railway 1896 38167**

This is the station building for the fantastic Clifton Rocks railway that ran underground between Clifton and Hotwells. It opened in 1893 and closed in 1934, as it clashed with the development of the new Portway road.





**Lulsgate Airport c1965** B212036

From humble beginnings as a flying club in Filton, Bristol's civil airport has come a long way and now handles flights from all corners of Europe. The original terminal building which we see here was replaced completely in a multi-million pound face lift in 2000.

start of the 19th century was the Clifton Rocks Railway (38167, opposite): it ran underground up and down a steep 45° chute between Hotwells and Clifton. Designed by George Newnes, it was driven by filling the descending carriages with enough water to give them sufficient weight to pull up the ascending carriages. The bottom station was sunk deep into the steep limestone walls of the Avon Gorge. It was closed in 1934.

Not content with pioneering roles in sea, road and rail transport, Bristol also played a huge role in British aviation. In 1910, Sir

George White, the owner of the Bristol Tramway, bought the parts to manufacture a flying machine in one of his sheds in Filton. He went on to produce the Bristol Boxkite, the world's first military aircraft. Aviation and aerospace development has continued in Filton ever since, with the crowning moment coming in 1969 when the British/French built Concorde made its maiden flight over the city.

Filton was also the birthplace of Bristol's civil airport, although in 1927 it was little more than a flying club, inaugurated by a team of local businessmen. Over its first few years it

# Transport

attracted enough interest to warrant a move to a new larger site, near Whitchurch, where it became Britain's third civil airport. After WWII, land was purchased from the RAF at Lulsgate Bottom, 7 miles south of the city, and in 1957 the new Bristol (Lulsgate) Airport was officially opened by the Duchess of Kent (B212036, page 61). Major improvements took place over the

following three decades, and the airport grew from strength to strength before finally getting a complete facelift to start the new millennium. These days it is known as Bristol International Airport, and connects the West Country with places as far apart as the Canary Islands, Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey, as well as many domestic destinations.



The Centre 1901 47884c





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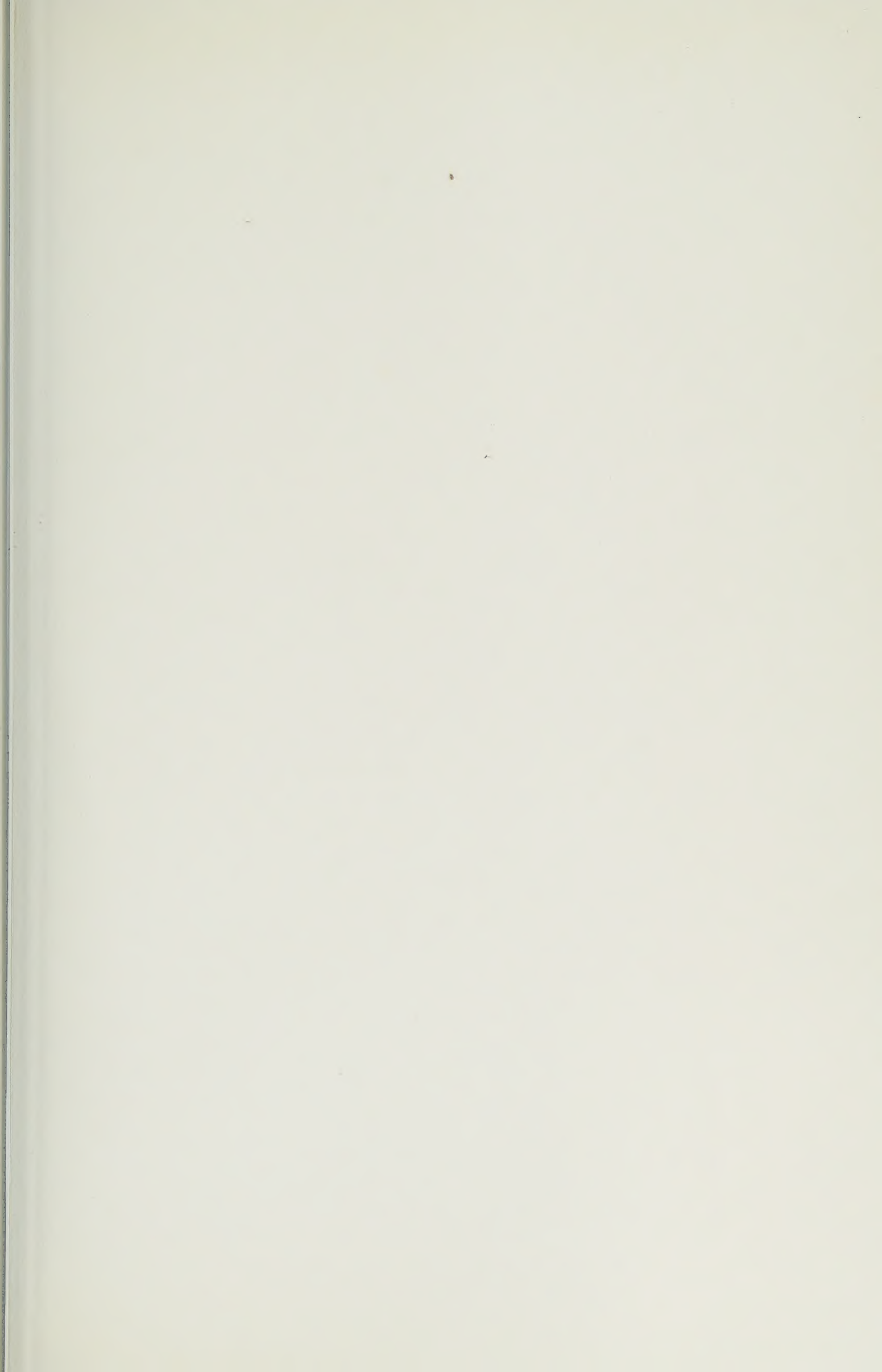
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